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Executive Registry
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1 October 1958

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MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR

STATOTHR

1. This memorandum recommends action in Paragraph 2.

STATOTHR

2. [redacted] of the Washington Bureau of the [redacted]

STATOTHR

[redacted] whom you saw on 1 July 1958, requests that you see him again at

STATOTHR

your convenience any day next week so that he can have a general discussion with you on propaganda in the under-developed countries of the world, etc.

STATOTHR

RECOMMEND that you see him.

[redacted]

TL

[redacted]

STANLEY J. GROGAN
Assistant to the Director

cc: DDCI

1958

(EXECUTIVE REGISTRY FILE)

PPE 43
Encounter—10/10—Galley 1

Richard Lowenthal

Tito's Adventure

In which love's labour was lost

"I do not think the new conflict with the Soviet Communists has been a disappointment to our Party or to our people—only to some of our leaders." The words were said with a smile, but the underlying bitterness was unmistakable. The speaker, a Yugoslav Communist with considerable international experience, clearly belonged to those who were relieved rather than surprised when the new break came. I met many of them during my latest visit to Yugoslavia in July, and one of my most striking impressions was the frankness with which they voiced their criticism of some of the policies pursued by President Tito during the period of the abortive reconciliation with the Soviet Union, or at least during its later part—roughly from September, 1956, to October, 1957.

Lest this be misunderstood, let me hasten to explain that my informants were loyal Communist Party members and firm believers in a posture of "non-alignment" in the cold war. (Indeed, I doubt whether even a non-Communist government in Yugoslavia, provided it cared to maintain the unity and independence of the country, could adopt a different posture.) None of them had ever feared that President Tito could be moved to join the Soviet military bloc, or submit once again to the discipline of a resurrected Cominform under Soviet or Soviet-Chinese leadership. None of them was in the least worried that there could be any serious opposition within the Party to its renewed stand for political and ideological autonomy. What they did convey, one by one, was a sense of having emerged from a dangerous adventure which had needlessly damaged the international position of their country, one that had exposed both the Party in general and each of them personally to intense strain. And, openly or by implication, they put the blame for this adventure on Tito himself.

Their criticism was not, of course, directed against reconciliation with the Soviet Union in the sense of a "normalisation" of relations, as originally begun after Stalin's death. That, on the contrary, they recognised as a precondition for securing the advantages of a non-aligned position in world affairs. The adventure, in their view, was the later attempt to influence the trend of overall Soviet policy—domestic as well as external—during its post-Stalin period of flux by "keeping in" with Khrushchev, backing him in his internal struggle for power. It was this gamble for high stakes that for more than a year seriously divided the Yugoslav Communist leaders behind their façade of outward unanimity, and it is its final failure that has brought the hidden tension to the surface. For nobody in Belgrade doubts that the failure is final, or that the whole policy was based on a miscalculation of the mainsprings of Khrushchev's policy where questions of Soviet bloc discipline and inter-Communist relations are concerned.

Nobody in Belgrade any longer believes that Khrushchev has been forced against his will to adopt this policy—either by a mysterious "Stalinist" opposition in the party presidium, or even by Mao Tse-tung. Of course, the Yugoslavs are well aware that Peking has in recent months exerted its influence to increase the violence and viciousness of the new Soviet campaign against them, just as it seems to use its influence to try and push Soviet foreign policy in general in the direction of bomb-rattling threats. But the Yugoslavs do not jump to the silly conclusion that because China, the economically and militarily dependent partner, is throwing its weight about and causing some wobbles in Soviet diplomacy, it has assumed the political and ideological leadership of the Communist world; nor can they believe that China suddenly, in the spring of 1958, forced a Soviet-Yugoslav break which Khrushchev himself had announced to them as impending in November, 1957, during the 40th anniversary celebrations of the Bolshevik seizure of power!

The "problem" of why Khrushchev excommunicated the Yugoslavs, which has caused so much speculation in the West, does not exercise the minds of the Yugoslav Communists. They realised the failure of their courtship of Khrushchev last October, when he sent them the draft of the declaration that was to be signed in Moscow, and that later was signed by all ruling Communist parties *except* the Yugoslavs. The essence of that declaration, with its attribution of all the troubles of the world to the "imperialist warmongers," its emphasis on the need to strengthen the Warsaw Pact, and its declaration of war on ideological "revisionism," was that nobody could be a good Communist who did not join the Soviet military bloc and accept the Soviet concept of ideological orthodoxy. It was, in fact, at the very moment when Khrushchev, with the elimination of Marshal Zhukov from the army leadership and the party presidium, finally achieved complete and undisputed dictatorial power at home that the Yugoslavs had to abandon the illusion of their influence on him, just when the horse they had backed all along had won the race, they discovered that it would not be paid off after all!

Or perhaps I should say that Tito, Rankovic, and a few other leaders discovered it, for many other Yugoslav Communists had suspected it long before. Because of that, the final failure of the gamble has for the first time seriously impaired—though not, of course, destroyed—Tito's personal authority within his party. This has had a number of curious consequences. One has been the extremely unpleasant tendency of the political police to increase the harassment of critics and suspected critics *after* the break with Russia—and I am not talking of pro-Soviet critics. Another has been the extreme official reticence about the secret history of the period of rapprochement, even though Khrushchev has deliberately taunted the Yugoslavs by "disclosing" selected half-truths in his speeches. But thirdly, and partly nullifying that official reticence, there has been the willingness of responsible critics to hint at vital, hitherto undisclosed facts—facts which allow, I believe, a tentative reconstruction of that secret history, and in particular of the rôle which the Yugoslav attitude to Hungary—before, during and after the revolution—played in it.

In one of his recent speeches, Khrushchev claimed that he had at no time placed all the blame for Stalin's 1948 break with Yugoslavia on Russia's account: he had always told the Yugoslav leaders that, in his view, both sides had made mistakes, but they had not dared to pass this on to their Party. The facts behind this claim are intriguing. It appears that Khrushchev's 1955 visit to Belgrade was preceded by a preparatory correspondence between the Soviet and Yugoslav Central Committees, extending over several months, and that in the course of these exchanges Khrushchev indeed proposed that each side should accept part of the responsibility for the past conflict: the Soviets would blame their share on Beria, and the Yugoslavs should blame theirs on Djilas (who by then had already been expelled from the party). This brilliant suggestion was not, of course, kept secret by Tito; it was put before a meeting of the Yugoslav Central Committee late in 1954, and was turned down at his own suggestion. (As one critic put it, "Tito would not be such a fool as to give Djilas all the credit for the struggle for national independence.") Tito's famous scowl when Khrushchev publicly dished out the Beria story on arrival at Belgrade airport was thus due to a realisation that Khrushchev intended to stick to a formula which Tito had already rejected. No agreement seems to have been reached on this point during the Belgrade discussions, which was one of the reasons why the joint declaration that finally emerged was signed on behalf of the governments rather than the Parties; and when Khrushchev defended his action against Molotov's criticism before the Soviet Central Committee on his return, he still maintained internally—as he has since stated publicly—that the first Cominform resolution of 1948 which excommunicated the Yugoslav party was "basically correct."

Nevertheless, the Yugoslavs were highly satisfied with the result of the visit. By confirming the first stage of the public rapprochement to the sphere of state relations, they had succeeded in establishing their right to sovereign equality and independence before accepting Party ties. The fact of the visit and of their treatment as brother-Marxists had the moral effect of a unilateral admission of Stalin's fault, whatever the formula; and the Soviet acceptance of the right of each country to determine its own road to socialism, though it might mean less in Khrushchev's mind than in Tito's, was bound to encourage all those Communists in the satellite countries who wished to get out of the Stalinist mire and to learn from the Yugoslav example, whether the Russians liked it or not. Yet the very extent of the new possibilities opened by their success faced them with a new problem.

Even before Khrushchev's visit to Belgrade, the beginning evaluation of Stalin had combined with the loosening of Soviet police supervision in the satellites, and with the first moves towards a normalisation of Soviet-Yugoslav relations, to cause new hopeful stirrings among the surviving victims of Stalin's "anti-Titoist" purges in the satellites. Watching these developments with keen interest, the Yugoslavs had come to the conclusion that nowhere were they more promising than in neighbouring Hungary. There, a surviving advocate of a policy of internal autonomy and popular reform, Imre Nagy, had actually come with Soviet consent to hold office as Prime Minister—though not power as Party leader—since the summer of 1953, and had followed the Yugoslav example in permitting the peasants to leave the collective farms. And when by the winter of 1954–5 the counter-offensive of the old Stalinist leadership around Rakosi led to bitter disputes in the Hungarian Central Committee, the Yugoslavs were optimistic about the outcome and about Nagy's eventual chances by further reforms to win a broader mass basis for an independent Communist régime. Even when Nagy was overthrown by the "old guard" in March 1955, apparently as a by-product of Malenkov's fall and the campaign for the primacy of heavy industry in Russia, the Yugoslavs were inclined to regard this as a mere temporary setback to the forces of progress, just as Nagy himself continued to prepare memoranda defending his policy for the Hungarian Central Committee and the Soviet leaders.

Nor was Yugoslav interest in developments among the Hungarian Communists purely ideological. For years, their own hardly-won independence had been perilously similar to isolation; and while Russia's new emphasis on peaceful coexistence encouraged them to proclaim the ambitious goal of an ultimate dissolution of the two hostile military blocs in world affairs, their practical diplomacy patiently pursued the more modest aim of extending the area of bloc-free nations, and preferably to create a belt of neutral territory in their neighbourhood. For that reason, Khrushchev's agreement to sign at last the "State Treaty" which guaranteed the withdrawal of both Russia and the Western powers from a neutral Austria was to the Yugoslavs a vital proof of his good will, far outweighing any awkward remnants of doctrinaire rigidity he might show. It owed its special importance in their minds to the hope that eventually an independent Communist Hungary might also become neutral with Russian consent. We know today, from Imre Nagy's papers, that by the beginning of 1956 he, too, had committed himself to the vision of close Yugoslav-Hungaro-Austrian cooperation on the basis of neutrality; and though by that time he had been expelled from Rakosi's party (and the fact that he held these views and communicated them to the Yugoslavs has since figured in its indictment for treason), the Rakosi régime was so obviously unstable that the Yugoslavs could well count on his eventual comeback. Not for nothing had the rehabilitation of Laszlo Rajk—executed in 1949 for alleged treasonable co-operation with Yugoslavia—and the dropping of Rakosi been the only specific changes in satellite policy which Tito urged on Khrushchev from the start; and he obtained the former in April 1956—after the disavowal of Stalin at the Soviet party congress—and the latter in July of the same year, after his own triumphant journey through Russia.

YET Khrushchev, in fact, never intended to permit Hungarian neutrality, or ven full political autonomy in internal affairs. When he finally sacrificed Rakosi because the pressure had become too strong and the discredit brought on the régime by Rakosi's known share in Stalin's crimes too intolerable, he appointed as successor not Nagy but Ernoe Geroe, who had been Rakosi's closest associate throughout. Moreover, warned by the Poznan rising and by the outburst of free discussion in both Poland and Hungary that "destalinisation" might easily go far beyond his intentions, and worried about Yugoslav moral backing for "anto-Stalinists" in the satellite countries, Khrushchev now faced Tito with a demand that he should switch his support to Geroe in the interests of stability: otherwise, his own new course in Russia might be in danger from "Stalinist reaction." At that time, such a danger was not wholly fictitious: the pro-Stalin riots in Georgia which followed circulation of the "secret speech" in the spring had not been confined to Tiflis, and some of the demonstrators had called for Molotov, then still a member of the party presidium and a first deputy premier of the Soviet Union.

This, then, was the decision confronting Tito: whether to continue backing his anti-Stalinist friends in the satellites and above all in Hungary, at the risk of incurring Khrushchev's displeasure and possibly weakening the "progressive" elements in the Soviet party presidium—or whether to abandon his reaf friends in order to keep Khrushchev's confidence and perhaps help keep him in power. Some might have viewed it as a decision between ideological and moral principle and cautious opportunism; from another angle, it implied a choice between the regional interests of an independent Yugoslavia, which had inspired the backing of Nagy, and the dream of influencing Soviet policy from outside. In fact, Tito chose Khrushchev, and invited Geroe to Yugoslavia; though he gained for Nagy readmission to the Party as a consolation prize. The choice was made against the advice of many of his closest colleagues, and of all the Yugoslavs most intimately concerned with Hungarian affairs. That was the moment when the adventure began.

AT this point, and before going on to the Yugoslav attitude during the crucial days of the Hungarian rising, a word must be said about the alignment within the Yugoslav leadership. The one group that wholeheartedly backed Tito's bid for Khrushchev's friendship were those conservative party bureaucrats who had long been uneasy about Yugoslavia's own "unorthodox" reforms, especially since Djilas' evolution had shown how easily these reforms, if pursued consistently, might become a threat to the Party's power. These people were as good Yugoslav patriots, as determined to defend their country's independence against all comers, as Tito himself; but because they hoped that better relations with Russia would stop the dangerous drift towards "liberalisation" at home, they were only too willing to believe that these better relations could be secured without danger to their independence, simply by talking less about ideological matters. This group was dominant in the Serbian Central Committee; it also included the only Serb (the only one from Serbia, at any rate) among Tito's deputies—Aleksandar Rankovic, creator of the political police and controller of the Party's organisation and personnel. It was, in fact, from about this time that Rankovic came forward as Tito's effective deputy in all Party matters, and began to be discreetly boosted as his designated successor.

Conversely, the leaders opposed to concessions to Khrushchev, and particularly to dealings with Geroe, were the same who had shown most zeal in promoting Yugoslavia's interal reforms, from the workers' councils to the dissolution of Soviet-style kollkhozes. These people did not belittle the importance of the process of social change that had started in post-Stalinist Russia, but they refused to regard it as dependent primarily on Khrushchev's influence, or to believe that Yugoslav efforts to support him could have a decisive effect on the broad trend of Russian development. In their view, Yugoslavia could contribute most to that trend by continuing her own experiment and seeking to win increased diplomatic elbow room by support for like-minded elements in neighbouring countries.

Not surprisingly, this group had its main strength among the Slovenian and Croatian leadership—i.e. in the most advanced parts of the country. To him, the vision of closer cooperation with a neutral Hungary and Austria was both historically plausible and politically welcome as a recipe for diluting the retrograde "Balkanic" influences within Yugoslavia, while preserving the unity of the Yugoslav nation. They also enjoyed the warm support of all those younger elements in the party who feared from closer relations with Russia the very thing which the orthodox disciplinarians hoped for—an end to reform and experiment, a tightening of control from above, an attempt to shut the windows and to restore the stuffy climate of an orthodoxy they had outgrown during the years when Yugoslavia first discovered the non-Communist world.

Between these groups, the ageing leader was apparently swayed by motives all his own. There is no reason to assume that he shared the preoccupations of the petty bureaucrats, their fear of further reforms and dangerous ideas, but neither was he much concerned to spread the ideology of "Titoism" within a limited regional framework. For years, he had become accustomed to bestride the world stage; now the evolution of post-Stalinist Russia seemed to present him with the chance of a new "historic rôle." Perhaps we in the West have during the past decade come to take Marshal Tito too much for granted as a national leader, and to underestimate the emotional importance of his long years as a professional international revolutionary. However genuinely and successfully he filled his national rôle, the separation from the comrades of his youth must have been a severe psychological strain—and the chance to return into that brotherhood, not defeated and contrite but proudly triumphant, an immense temptation. During his Russian journey in the summer of 1956, when enthusiastic crowds hailed him at every station as the symbol of their own new hopes, that temptation assumed flesh and blood. Russia, and with Russia the whole Communist world, seemed to lie at his feet, willing to follow his road if only he was patient. So when Khrushchev, having failed to obtain Tito's return to the Soviet bloc, sent to the satellite parties a circular warning them against Yugoslav heretical influences, and then offered reconciliation if Tito would shake hands with Geroe, how could he refuse?

BEFORE the Hungarian Party delegation under Geroe came to Yugoslavia, Vlajko Begovic, a member of the Yugoslav Central Committee, had warned in a long report from Budapest that Geroe enjoyed no authority and that events were moving towards a revolution. While the visit was in progress, Gumulka assumed power in Poland and defied Khrushchev's attempt to intervene; the news was enthusiastically received in Hungary. The delegation itself turned out to be divided: Kadar was clearly in favour of further changes but Geroe continued to defend his record; and the Yugoslavs, faithful to their agreement with Khrushchev, "did not intervene in Hungarian Party affairs." Directly on his return from Yugoslavia, Geroe made the provocative broadcast which turned a peaceful students' demonstration into a revolt, and during the following night asked for the intervention of Soviet troops which turned the revolt into a rising supported by the bulk of the Hungarian armed forces.

The Yugoslav leaders were naturally shocked by this "Stalinist" behaviour of their supposed protégé, Geroe, and extremely worried about the consequences. When, after a few days, the success of the rising led to the replacement of Geroe by Kadar with Soviet consent, and the pretence of Nagy's appointment to head the government became a reality, they hoped—as did the Soviet representatives on the spot—that Kadar and Nagy would succeed in stabilising the situation under a reformed Communist régime. But it quickly became clear that the revolutionary movement had gone beyond that stage, that the people and the armed forces were calling for a revival of democratic political parties, a withdrawal of all Soviet troops, and immediate neutrality and that Nagy was willing to meet these demands. At that point the Soviets lost confidence in Nagy—and so did Tito.

The motives of that decision have been obscured by a flood of lies about the alleged danger of "fascists" and "counter-revolutionaries" getting control of the movement—lies which Tito later repeated in his Pula speech. The more honest Yugoslav spokesmen have always said that the crucial argument for the second Soviet intervention was one of power politics rather than ideology. The Soviet leaders had, in fact, never intended to allow a Communist Hungary to leave the Warsaw Pact; they could not possibly permit a non-Communist Hungary to do so in an atmosphere of violent rebellion against Soviet control, and at the moment of the international crisis produced by the Suez expedition. In Soviet language, which the Yugoslavs understood only too well, the term "counter-revolutionary" simply expressed the fact that the movement was no longer in Communist hands, and the fear that a new democratic government would in fact assume a pro-Western orientation whatever its formal neutrality. What was at stake, from the Soviet point of view, was the loss of an important territory to their potential enemies, without compensation and with incalculable repercussions on other members of their bloc, at a moment of high international tension. To prevent that, they were prepared to use force.

The Yugoslav leaders were thrown into a panic. They seriously feared an East-West clash on their borders; most of them also feared that anti-Communist revolution might spread to engulf their own régime. For a day or two, some of them considered the idea of marching in before the Soviets did, to ensure both the survival of Communism and "real" neutrality; at any rate, Yugoslav diplomats sounded Nagy's advisers on how they would react to such a move, but nothing came of it. Instead, *there is now evidence that before their decisive second intervention, the Soviet leaders informed and consulted the Yugoslavs, and that Tito, while disagreeing on some points with the Soviet analysis, gave his advance consent to the crushing of the Hungarian revolution.*

THIS advance consultation is the background to the charge, made in the Kadar government's reply to the Yugoslav protest against Imre Nagy's execution, that "during the night of November 3rd–4th, when the responsible Yugoslav authorities, *on the basis of confidential information received by them*, had learned that at dawn on November 4th the revolutionary worker-peasant government and the Soviet troops would, with joint forces, launch a counter-attack to crush the counter-revolution, Minister Soldatic telephoned the leaders of the Imre Nagy group and, with reference to the expressed request of Belgrade, appealed to them to avail themselves at once to the right of asylum," [my italics]. The reference to confidential information clearly implies something more official than the reports about the approach of returning Soviet forces which were generally known in the Hungarian capital during its last days of freedom.

I was first told about this consultation—by a critical Yugoslav Communist—two weeks before the above hint was published by the Hungarians. According to my informant, it took the form of a flying visit by Khrushchev (straight from Moscow) and Mikoyan (coming from Hungary where he had just got Kadar to abandon Nagy) to Tito at Brioni island on one of the first days of November; the Soviet leaders had by then made up their minds, but were anxious to obtain Yugoslav political support for their action in order to ease Kadar's future work in rebuilding the régime, and to contain anticipated reactions in Poland and other satellites. I am not certain that the details about the flying visit can easily be reconciled with what is otherwise known about Khrushchev's and Mikoyan's timetable in those crowded days, but I am satisfied that Yugoslav advance agreement was solicited in some form, and was obtained. Apart from the hint in the Hungarian note, this is confirmed by the immediate Yugoslav reaction to the second Soviet intervention: it was one of complete approval. This was shown in a circular sent out by the Yugoslav Central Committee on November 5th; in the attitude taken, clearly on instruction from home, by the Yugoslav observer at the Asian Socialist conference then meeting at Rangoon; in the behaviour of the Yugoslav chief delegate to the United Nations, who turned his back when Anna Kethly, the Hungarian Socialist leader, was introduced to him; and not least in the grossly misleading confidential information sent by Tito at the time to Pandit Nehru, which was the principal cause of the unsympathetic attitude initially taken by the Indian leader towards the revolt of the Hungarian people.

It would be unjust to accuse Tito and his team of having betrayed the cause of Hungarian democracy. They are Communists, not democrats, and they cannot betray principles which they have never professed. But they did betray their own dream of a neutral, progressive Hungary when it could no longer be reconciled with the preservation of Communist party rule, and they sided with Kadar against Nagy who clung to the dream. As a last service, they tried to save them by granting them temporary asylum in the Yugoslav Embassy, but they were not strong enough. If they were ever deceived by the Kadar government's promise of safe-conduct for those who would leave the building, their Minister at least must have learnt the truth at the last minute. For the Hungarian officer who headed the escort for Nagy—he is now a refugee abroad—reported to him with the words: "Mr. Prime Minister, it's not home we are going"; and that was still inside the building and before Nagy's final leave-taking from his Yugoslav friends.

THE critical reaction of the Yugoslav Communist rank and file to the Soviet intervention in Hungary proved unexpectedly strong. For the first time, Tito had publicly to admit a mistake. Within a week of the final crushing of the revolution by Soviet tanks, he admitted in his Pula speech that he had been unwise to receive Geroe who had proved himself an unrepentant Stalinist and had brought about the Hungarian tragedy by his incompetent and provocative behaviour. In a further circular he sought to explain the nature of the pressure from Khrushchev to which he had yielded in September. Moreover, he publicly emphasized the issue on which he now disagreed with the official Soviet view—that the rising had started as a genuine working class movement with the active participation of many good Communists, and had only come under the leadership of the "reactionary elements" later on. A month later, Edward Kardelj, the leading ideologist of the party and the architect of many of its anti-Stalinist reforms, who had been silent since the September agreement to support Geroe, went even farther in a speech to the Federal Assembly, and argued that the Hungarian revolution had shown how utterly a monopolistic party, by merging with the state machine and relying on its power, could become estranged from the working class—regardless of whether or not it called itself Communist and claimed to be the vanguard of that class; and he explicitly drew the conclusion that the Yugoslav Communists should show more boldness than hitherto in detaching themselves from the state machine and relying chiefly on their influence in the organs of self-government. But neither Tito nor Kardelj could even now condemn the second and decisive Soviet intervention; the formula adopted by them was that it *might* prove historically justified *if* it led to a better new start of the Communist régime.

Meanwhile, Khrushchev had really suffered a temporary weakening of his domestic position, owing not to Tito's action, but to the actions of the Polish and Hungarian peoples who were subject to no such subtle tactical calculations. Even though the Soviet leaders now shared Tito's contempt for Geroe's incompetence, they could not swallow his view of the total bankruptcy of the Hungarian Stalinist régime and the revolutionary character of the rising; the speeches of Tito and particularly Kardelj gave rise to bitter polemics in the Soviet and international Communist press. The Yugoslavs answered back for a time, most outspoken when Bulganin hinted—at the beginning of April, 1957—at a possible trial of Imre Nagy in which they would be compromised. But the knowledge of the leaders that they had approved the second and decisive Soviet intervention in advance caused them to pull their punches—as it does to this day. Indeed, even this summer, when I asked whether they still considered the second intervention as "historically justified" in the light of subsequent developments including the execution of Nagy, I could not get a single Yugoslav spokesman, whether government official or Central Committee member, to answer on the record with a clear No.

Indeed, while the first after effect of the Hungarian tragedy within the Yugoslav Party had been to make Tito yield somewhat to the indignation of the rank and file, second thoughts soon made him veer in a different direction. Clearly, the élan of the forces of reform within the satellite countries had been broken by the frightful object lesson of Hungary, and Yugoslavia's own independent ideological influence would henceforth be limited by the ambiguity of her position at the critical moment. In Russia herself, Stalinist reaction seemed once again in the ascendant, and if it finally triumphed all the gains of the post-Stalin thaw might be lost. Two, the one overriding task, after Hungary even more than before, seemed to be to support Khrushchev against the Stalinists. At the end of April, 1957, Tito sent him a personal message offering a renewal of the ideological truce, which was gladly accepted; the press polemics stopped abruptly, and the reformers within the Yugoslav leadership fell silent once again.

Khrushchev, however, did not fail to spot the weakness underlying the move. Shortly after his triumph over Malenkov, Molotov, and Kaganovich, in a speech in a Prague factory he talked of the Yugoslavs in a tone of condescension verging on friendly contempt: he felt sure that the remaining differences would be overcome by frank talk, as he had no objection to the Yugoslavs retaining their own peculiar institutions such as workers' councils—but he would no longer tolerate that they set themselves up as a rival international model. The frank talking subsequently took place in Bucharest at the beginning of August—and it marked the closest point of the rapprochment.

BY that time, Khrushchev was fully embarked on plans for some new form of organised co-operation among at least the ruling Communist Parties, which was to consolidate once again the unity of the Soviet bloc and to help restore the international authority of its leading power; and he wanted to make sure that the Yugoslavs, despite their bitter memories of the Cominform, would help rather than hinder the new project. The Bucharest meeting took place in great secrecy, and the final communiqué was ambiguous, talking on one side of obstacles to complete agreement which would still have to be overcome, but on the other of the particular importance both sides attached to "the strengthening, in all its aspects, of the unity and fraternal co-operation of the Communist and Workers' Parties of the peoples of all socialist countries." Since the break, Khrushchev has claimed that at this meeting Tito agreed to come to the 40th anniversary celebrations in Moscow in November and to sign a joint declaration of principles of the ruling Communist Parties; while the Yugoslavs say that they left under the impression of having convinced Khrushchev that they could be more useful to the cause of peace by staying, contrary to his original wish, outside the Soviet bloc. The two versions are not really in conflict, and each of them contains some truth—but hardly the whole truth.

The question of Yugoslavia's joining the Soviet camp in the military sense, by becoming a member of the Warsaw Pact, was not a major subject of discussion at the meeting. Yugoslavia's unwillingness to do so was, of course, a permanent sore point with Khrushchev, and he probably raised it again. But when they declined, he had no need to insist in the light of two considerations: their growing willingness to be "useful to the cause of peace" by supporting Soviet foreign policy all along the line—including, presumably, the promise of an early recognition of the East German government; and their agreement to accept much closer Party ties than before.

In fact, the talks were held strictly on a Party level, with the international secretaries of both Parties present and without any government ministers or officials; and the principal subject was the forthcoming Moscow conference of all the Communist Parties of the world, and the need to issue a joint declaration of principles. If the Yugoslavs agreed to that, they would automatically have to abandon the attitude, first defined by Kardelj in his Oslo speech in 1954, that Eastern Communist and Western "reformist" parties were both making valuable contributions to the cause of socialism, with its corollary that the Soviet bloc had no monopoly of Socialist progress; and they would contribute to rebuilding an international Communist authority whose influence would eventually compel them to rejoin the military bloc as well. Thas was at least how Khrushchev saw it. Yet Tito did not see it that way; and he agreed to attend the Moscow celebrations and to help prepare a joint declaration of principles without fully realising the inevitable consequences of such a move.

For the Yugoslav leader was now back in the same mood as a year previously, before the Hungarian revolution; and he envisaged the forthcoming Moscow celebrations as the second act to his triumphant tour of Russia—again with Khrushchev as his guide, but this time with the whole élite of international Communism, including Mao Tse-tung, welcoming him back to the fold and listening to his words. The brilliance of the prospect somehow blinded the 65-year-old man to the change in the situation brought about by the Hungarian tragedy. Once again, as at the time of his visit to Yalta and his agreement to back Geroe, he was willing to stake the future of Yugoslavia on the chance of influencing Khrushchev; and once again he overruled the voices of caution, of which there were many.

DURING the weeks that followed, Yugoslav non-alignment rapidly disappeared in all but the formal sense. In September, during Gomulka's visit, Tito publicly subscribed to the Soviet formula of "proletarian internationalism" as a guide to foreign policy, and even gave his own interpretation of the "leading rôle of the Soviet Union"—in a sense which would recognise its special responsibility for the common cause without impairing the right of each Communist state to its sovereign equality and independence. Soon afterwards, recognition of the East German government followed—a unique act among "non-aligned" states. There remained only one meaning to the refusal to join the Soviet "camp," but that an important one: so long as Yugoslavia was not tied by a higher discipline, its support of Soviet foreign policy, however complete, remained conditional—it could still be withdrawn if Khrushchev tried to interfere with Yugoslav independence or relapsed into a policy of aggressive threats.

It was the Russian attempt to eliminate that last but vital reservation which brought about the recent crisis. As Yugoslavia's new policy increasingly isolated her from the West, as her recognition of Eastern Germany led to a break in relations with Bonn and to public attacks in the United States, while the new heavy sentence on Djilas and the trial of pre-war trade union leaders alienated the sympathy of Western democratic socialists, Khrushchev clearly believed that the time had come to increase the pressure. Suggestions for military arrangements, made through diplomatic channels and through Marshal Zhukov during his visit, became fore importunate. There were attempts to interfere in Party matters as well: the new Yugoslav programme promised for the next Party congress, which was to codify the specific outlook of Yugoslav Communism—including, inevitably, its differences to the Soviet variety—had been all but shelved after the Bucharest meeting so as to avoid new disagreements; but now the Soviets asked to see the draft so that they might suggest amendments even before it reached the Yugoslav Party members! The decisive moment came when the Soviet draft for the declaration of principles to be signed by the ruling Communist Parties in Moscow arrived in Belgrade. For though Khrushchev has told the truth in that this draft did not yet contain the formula recognising Soviet leadership (that was only put in later on Mao's suggestion), it was a harsh and uncompromising Cold War document, and clearly faced the Yugoslavs with the implicit choice of either unconditionally joining the Warsaw Pact, or being attacked as "revisionists" and expelled from the Communist family.

When Tito saw that draft, he knew at last that the gamble on his influence with Khrushchev had been lost. The dream of his triumphant return to the Communist World General Staff was ended, and his own visit to the Moscow celebrations had to be called off. His deputies, Kardelj and Rankovic, had to make it clear from the start that they would not sign the declaration and were promptly treated in Moscow as outcasts, despite their readiness to sign the almost equally absurd "Peace Manifesto" as a gesture of good will; and when Khrushchev saw them at last, he clearly warned them that they would be attacked. Since then, the Yugoslavs have had to prepare for the new break—and the first measure of preparation consisted precisely in getting the programmatic codification of their own theories ready for their Party congress.

But then, Tito still seems to have entertained the hope that the inevitable disagreement could be contained in the forms of a fraternal discussion among comrades. After the draft had been published and circulated to all Communist parties in February of this year, and the opening blasts of Soviet criticism had been received by correspondence between the Central Committees, he had some amendments adopted so as to mitigate those criticisms of Soviet "hegemonism" and of the Warsaw Pact at which the Russians seemed to take particular offence.

Given these concessions, Tito clearly expected that those East European leaders who wished to preserve some degree of internal independence from Moscow—and among them he included not only Gomulka but Kadar—might, in the interest of their own autonomy, prevail on Khruschev to avoid an outright break. At the end of March, Kadar's wish for an invitation to Yugoslavia—uttered long ago in a very different situation—was suddenly fulfilled, and the need for a joint stand for the autonomous rights of all Communist parties, whatever their theoretical differences, was broached to him. Kadar's reaction seemed friendly enough; but when Khrushchev came to Hungary immediately after Kadar's return he concluded from Kadar's report that Tito was trying to form an "autonomist" bloc with Hungary and Poland, and reacted not only by sanctioning the public attack on the Yugoslav programme, but by demanding from all the satellites what amounted to an immediate break of Party relations with the Yugoslavs: this was the decision not to send fraternal delegates to the Yugoslav congress. It was Kadar's immediate compliance and Gomulka's hesitation which accounted for the lavish praise of the former and the thinly veiled insults against the latter (as well as against Tito) in the somewhat high-spirited speech Khrushchev made on his return to Moscow.

But even apart from these last-minute incidents, it was only logical that Khrushchev, viewing the Yugoslav programme as a counter-document to his own twelve-Party declaration, took it as the occasion for an all-out attack and final excommunication. For that document justified in a programmatic form the right of an independent Communist state to remain neutral between the military blocs, by denying, in an elaborate analysis of the contemporary social scene, the Soviet bloc's claim to a monopoly of Socialist Progress. But if these arguments were valid for Yugoslavia, they were equally valid for any and every satellite; if a good Communist could hold these views, it followed that a good Communist was entitled to take any member country out of the Warsaw Pact and declare itself neutral. For their own sake, the Yugoslav Communists had finally had to proclaim in a general form the right to neutrality which they had failed to support at the critical moment in Hungary. The Soviets showed their understanding of what was at stake by demonstrating that the right to neutrality did not exist in the Communist world: they excommunicated the Yugoslavs—and they executed Imre Nagy.

THIS end of the adventure has not solved the long-standing disagreements among the Yugoslav leaders, but has made it more difficult to hide them. The critics are naturally inclined to say "I told you so." The conservative bureaucrats, equally naturally, seek to defend their positions by tightening up discipline within the party and by police measures against those critics who were expelled from it in 1954 because they refused to support the wholesale condemnation of Djilas. The resulting atmosphere can be smelt in the off-the-record outburst of one member of the top Party leadership when asked by a Western journalist whether he regarded the execution of Nagy as a sign of strength or of weakness on the part of the Soviet government. "It was a sign of fear" he replied "just as our treatment of Djilas was a sign of fear."

The speaker was very far indeed from sharing Djilas' views about the need for an opposition party; he was merely utterly fed up with the harm done to his country and party by the stupid meddling of the political police with Party affairs. On no previous visit have I heard Party members complain about the activities of the police; this time it happened again and again. The reason is not, so far as I can judge, that the police have become more powerful, but that they are trying to become more active in many petty ways because they feel threatened. I know of no arbitrary arrests; the nearest thing is the case of Zhivko Vnuk, expelled former editor of the Zagreb Party weekly, who at the end of May was hauled in for three or four days of bullying "interrogation." But there have been quite a number of cases of more polite prolonged interrogations of loyal Party members, ranging from their personal relations with expelled critics to questions concerning their reservations during the height of the Tito-Khrushchev flirtation; there has been systematic police interference with the attempts of Party leaders in good standing to bring some of the expelled critics back into the Party; and there has been a real orgy of petty harassment against the expelled men themselves. Not only has Vladimir Dedijer, Tito's biographer, been again and again refused permission to travel abroad since his Stockholm lecture in the spring of last year, when he committed the crime of criticising not his own country, but the Soviet Union—in terms almost identical with those now used in the new Yugoslav party programme, but considered harmful to the ideological truce with Moscow at the time; but the Catholic partisan leader and one-time vice-president of post-war Slovenia, Edward Kocbek, was recently prevented from giving a lecture to a left-wing Catholic group in Trieste, on the ground that he had kept on friendly terms with Dedijer! Equally stupid are the efforts of the police to prevent the publication abroad of a critical, political-philosophical play by the Serb writer Bora Drenovac, another expelled former Partisan, by buying up the French translation of the manuscript. Most serious of all was the recent deterioration—again *after* the break—of the prison régime for Djilas, which led him in June to threaten a hunger strike; fortunately the latest information is that conditions improved again before such a desperate step was necessary.

The political importance of all this pettiness is that the blame for it is widely attributed, not indeed to Tito who is believed to get very little information on these matters, but to Rankovic. Though he has abandoned direct control of the political police years ago, he is generally regarded as its ultimate political chief and protector; and while even critics who know him well describe him as honest and straightforward and do not believe that he would personally stoop to acts of vindictiveness against his old comrades, they claim that his outlook is essentially rigid and narrow and that he covers the stupidities of his subordinates in the belief that he is shielding the régime from the spreading of "hostile influences." But Rankovic's power within the Party has steadily grown in recent years; and while there is no formal basis for the general assumption that he is Tito's designated successor, it finds indirect confirmation not only in the unofficial talk of official spokesmen, but in the changes made in the Party secretariat after the recent congress, when its work was subdivided into a number of commissions: Rankovic was put in charge of the political commission and thus made effective head of the secretariat in Tito's absence, while Kardelj, though formally still a member of the secretariat, got no commission and is concentrating more and more on running the administration and developing the organs of self-government.

Clearly, the intended division of labour is that while Kardelj, the ideologue, decentralises the administration, Rankovic, the disciplinarian, will re-centralise the Party whose power remains ultimately decisive. In practice, however, things do not seem to work out wholly in accordance with this classical Leninist recipe. On one side, the tasks of the various self-government organs, from workers' councils through local communes and producers' councils to the parliaments of the national republics, are now so varied that it is practically impossible for the Party leadership to give its members in these various organs concrete directives on more than the broadest issues; on the other hand, decisions must be taken in the light of the local situation, and that means—even with Party members—in the light of local and regional interests. The Party régime does not remain untouched by the growth of a decentralised society.

All this limits the authority of the top leadership, and that limitation may also prove effective in the question of Tito's succession. It is not a question of personal rivalry: Kardelj, the obvious alternative to Rankovic within the present inner ring, would from all accounts be perfectly content to continue as No. 2 man after Tito's death—which may anyhow still be a long way off. The trouble comes from below: the idea of Rankovic as policy-making leader does not seem to catch on with the party cadres, at any rate not outside Serbia. He rarely speaks in other parts of the country and is not regarded as a unifying national figure. He has not lost the odour of the police, and he represents a conservative outlook whose supporters by now are probably in a minority in the Central Committee, and certainly in a minority lower down. And while formerly the fact of Tito's personal confidence could easily have silenced all these doubts, Tito's own authority within the Party is, after the unhappy adventure with Khruschev, no longer as absolute as it used to be: it is still amply sufficient for the "old man" to carry on, but he will have to pay some heed to trends of opinion within the Party, and he may no longer be strong enough to commit its future by picking his own successor.

For the future belongs to the new post-war generation, which for the first time appeared in numbers at the recent Party congress; and that generation seems in Communist Yugoslavia as much less ideologically-minded than their elders as in Western Europe. Having grown up during the years of conflict with Russia and gradual relaxation at home, most of them seem to have felt as uncomfortable during the pro-Soviet episode as the older reformers, but—at least partly—for different reasons: their criticism attacks the whole illusion of "Yugocentrism," of trying to influence world history from their small and still comparatively poor country; and while they strongly disapprove of a policy which risked the loss of Western confidence and aid in an attempt to wrestle for the soul of Khrushchev, they do not see much sense either in losing Soviet aid because of an ideological programme outlining alternative roads to socialism. They would like to concentrate on cultivating their own garden, without permitting anybody to interfere but also without pursuing a grandiose dream of Yugoslavia's international mission. They believe that a cautious and modest neutrality which does not unfold any flags but seeks friends wherever possible is what best befits a small Balkan nation, and that a slow but steady expansion of internal freedom will be best for a multi-national country with a bitter history of civil war and revolution. And eventually they will have their way.